



JOHNSONIAN NEWS LETTER

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THE YALE JOHNSON EDITION

For many of us the most exciting announcement in years is the recent press release from New Haven describing plans for an edition of the works of Samuel Johnson. The Yale University Press is to be the publisher, and the necessary funds are being furnished by the Aaron E. Norman Fund of New York and by four private individuals.

For years the need for a complete and accurate version of what Johnson wrote has been widely recognized. Not since 1825 has there been any attempt at a comprehensive edition, and, as many of you know, the text for this so-called standard authority is very bad indeed. Now at last we are to have a new set of volumes, produced in the best tradition of modern textual scholarship and including everything which can definitely be ascribed to Johnson except the Dictionary. We throw our collective hats in the air and shout "Hurrah!"

The task of producing this great work will be apportioned to specialists the world over. Acting in a supervisory capacity is an editorial committee recently appointed by President Griswold of Yale. Fritz Liebert (Yale) is to be Chairman of this committee, and Allen T. Hazen (Columbia), General Editor. These two will be chiefly in charge of organizational details. A better pair to lead the project it would be hard to find. They have just the right combination of enthusiasm, long acquaintance with matters of Johnsonian canon, and expert bibliographical skills.

Other members of the supervising committee are: Bertrand H. Bronson (Calif.), Walter J. Bate (Harvard), R. W. Chapman (Oxford), James L. Clifford (Columbia), Robert Halsband (Hunter), Arthur A. Houghton, Jr. (New York), Frederick W. Hilles (Yale), Donald and Mary Hyde (Somerville, N.J.), William R. Keast (Cornell), Edward L. McAdam, Jr. (N.Y.U.), Robert F. Metzendorf (Yale), L. F. Powell (Oxford), S. C. Roberts (Cambridge), and D. Nichol Smith (Oxford). The first meeting of the committee (those who can attend) will be

held in New York on May 31, at which time various specific plans will be discussed.

As decisions are made, we will pass them on to readers of JNL, so that you all may know what is going on. Indeed, we hope to make this News Letter an informal adjunct to the great edition, serving as a medium for the exchange of news, queries, and suggestions connected with the project. In the years ahead we trust we will have many triumphs to record and no defeats. And so again may we express our unbounded enthusiasm over the present plans. We are confident that Johnson scholars everywhere will gladly cooperate with Fritz and Allen until the last volume (how many cannot yet be determined) rolls off the press.

DICTIONARY CELEBRATIONS

In our March number we described various special exhibitions which were being planned in honor of the bi-centenary of the publication of Johnson's Dictionary. We are glad to pass on further news of this memorable event.

The opening celebrations at Yale and Columbia proved to be delightful affairs, bringing together Johnson enthusiasts from as far west as Chicago. We are certain that those of you who were privileged to attend had a wonderful time. On the afternoon of April 14 the Friends of the Columbia Libraries entertained in New York (a typed offset catalogue of this exhibition is being issued by the Library). The next day there was a large gathering at New Haven to hear Bill Wimsatt's excellent address, and later to enjoy the hospitality of the Yale University Library and Fritz Liebert. A four page printed sheet served as a formal introduction to the tremendous exhibition, which spread all over the ground floor of the library. A complete catalogue is promised later.

As many of you know, a pictorial commentary on these two celebrations -- entitled "Salute to Sam" -- appeared in Life for May 2. The selection of illustrations proved amusing, particularly the view of Johnson scholars drinking a toast to the Great Cham, with the faces of nearly every individual obscured in one way or another. Quipped one observer: "The caption of the picture should have been 'A group of scholars afraid of being investigated.'"

Since our last issue we have heard of further exhibitions. At the University of Pennsylvania Library was displayed a copy of the

first edition ordered in 1755 by Benjamin Franklin for the Academy, and now part of the university's Founders' Collection. At Randolph Macon Woman's College the library arranged a special exhibit. Another was to be seen throughout April at the Chenery Library of the Boston University College of Liberal Arts. For this one, Donald J. Winslow of the Department of English prepared a four page printed note concerning Johnson and his Dictionary. At the opening on April 1 there was a talk, "Is Linguistics a Science?" by Stuart Crawford of the Classics Department. On display from April 15 to July 15 at the University of Colorado there is another exhibit. As Henry Pettit writes: "It is very modest, but I am certain the young heart of Sam would be warmed by this display in the Rockies."

At the Stationers' Hall in London there was a special commemoration on April 19, when Geoffrey Tillotson was the speaker. The printed announcement lists some nine publishers and booksellers connected with the Stationers Co., who had original shares in the Dictionary, and William Strahan, the printer, who was Master of the Company in 1774. Included among the exhibits was the Register in which the First Edition was entered, April 10, 1775; portraits of Strahan, Richardson, etc.; a copy of the Plan in the original wrapper together with other first editions; and Strahan's original ledger listing the cost of printing of the Dictionary, the number of copies printed, and the contributions made by the partners. We might add that a recent advertisement of Michael Joyce's new study of Johnson (which we have not yet seen) states that the publication was designed as part of the Dictionary celebration. The publishers, Longmans Green & Co., add that they are the sole survivors of the original group of proprietors of the Dictionary in 1755.

Because we did not hear about it in time, we missed a special trans-Atlantic broadcast of the University of Chicago Round Table on Sunday, May 1. The program was arranged in cooperation with the EBC, and the speakers were L. F. Powell and James Sutherland in London and James H. Sledd and Rea Keast in this country. The title was "The Language We Speak," with the Dictionary serving as a point of departure and ultimate return. Powell, we hear, was ill at the time, but insisted on going ahead anyway. As he wrote in a recent letter to Sledd, "The Broadcast didn't quite take the shape I thought it would. I particularly wanted to say that a book which had sold, in one form or another, in Johnson's lifetime, close on 50,000 copies, and had been revised and supplemented for over a century after his death, must have exercised a very great influence directly or indirectly. The thousands of people who consulted his Dictionary went

away with more than the mere knowledge of the way in which words were spelled." To which we add "Exactly so!"

We have received from J. E. Congleton a mimeographed description of the Dictionary exhibition held at the University of Florida Library. At the opening there was an address by Lalia Phipps Boone, after which there was a party which extended into the hours when Johnson found conversation most exhilarating. The projected volume from the University of Florida Press -- Johnson's Dictionary 1755-1955: Some Facts and Problems -- prepared by J. E. Congleton and James Hodges, will not be out until later in the year, or early next. Congleton is putting together a bibliography of books and articles relating to the Dictionary. If you know of any rare publications which might be missed, please send the information on to Congleton, care the Dept. of English at the University of Florida. He expects to cover the entire period from Johnson's day to ours.

In addition to those listed earlier, there have been a number of articles bearing on the celebration: Gwin J. Kolb and James H. Sledd, "The Reynolds Copy of Johnson's Dictionary," John Rylands Bulletin for March; J. E. Congleton, "Johnson's Dictionary, 1755-1955," South Atlantic Bulletin (MLA) for March; James L. Clifford, "Dr. Johnson's Dictionary: a Memorable Achievement of the Mind," New York Times Book Review for April 10; Robert Halsband, "The Dictionary," Saturday Review for April 16; Max J. Herzberg, "Johnson Bicentenary," Word Study for May. Herzberg also included in this issue comments on the celebrations and reviews of recent Johnsonian books. Time in its April 18 issue, under "Education," had over a page devoted to "The Great Drudge" and his Dictionary; and Newsweek on the same date used it and Sledd and Kolb's new book as a starting point for a piece entitled "Conversation U.S.A."

BOSWELL IN ITALY, CORSICA, AND FRANCE

The eagerly-awaited next volume of the Yale Boswell edition was published by McGraw-Hill on May 23 (It will not appear in England until autumn). This one continues the Grand Tour and takes Boswell about Italy, on his celebrated visit to Corsica, and then home through France. It ends with the breaking off of his journal in London in February 1766.

In every way a beautiful book, it has a colorful jacket, useful end-paper maps, and eight illustrations. Here is a wealth of entertainment for the Boswell enthusiast. Throughout there is

remarkable variety -- a constantly shifting scene and alteration of mood. After the dissipation and the sometimes comic attempts at seduction in Italy, there is the high-minded exaltation of the adventurous trip to Corsica. After Paris and the fantastic trip across the channel with Rousseau's mistress (at least what we know of it), there is the same old London. When the book ends, his years of Continental adventure are over, and Boswell is back where generations of readers have thought he belonged -- with Johnson and Goldsmith at the Mitre.

With this volume we welcome Frank Brady, who joins Fred Pottle as co-editor. Brady's Introduction is just right -- compressed yet illuminating, smoothly written and full of meat. It gives the reader what he needs and admirably sets the stage for the comedy that is to come. For Brady it is an auspicious beginning of what we hope will be a long career as a Boswell editor.

In the rest of the volume the two editors skillfully weave their narrative out of a mass of disparate materials: short sections of manuscript journal, a lengthy published account, hurried notes and memoranda, verses, expense accounts, and over two hundred letters sent or received by Boswell during the period. Those who have worked with large collections of manuscripts will understand fully the problems which had to be met, and will appreciate the way the evidence is shaped into a readable narrative. We suspect the editors had many a pang when forced to leave out this or that new detail, but the result certainly justifies their rigorous treatment.

We won't say that we wholly agree with Bob Halsband that this is the best of the recent Boswell volumes, but doubtless many will think so. Despite the general opinion to the contrary, we still find equal delight in the more sober struggles of Boswell in Holland. But we won't resurrect that old argument. The important thing is to express our wholehearted appreciation for the work of the Boswell scholars and McGraw-Hill, who together are making this momentous series possible.

THE REPUBLIC OF LETTERS

Louis Kronenberger in The Republic of Letters (Knopf) has gathered together a series of his short pieces, most of them prefaces and reviews which have appeared from time to time since 1936. Well over half the book is devoted to the eighteenth century, with essays on La Rochefoucauld, Pope, Robinson Crusoe, Lady Mary Wortley

Montagu, two of Fielding's novels, Johnson and Boswell, Gibbon, and "The Eighteenth-Century Ideal." A number are completely new to us, particularly those on Lady Mary and on Jonathan Wild.

No one need be told that Kronenberger writes brilliantly with epigrammatic wit, or that his obvious relish of his subject matter is infectious. This is obvious in all of his work. To be sure, the dramatic color of his phrases sometimes makes for apparent surface exaggeration -- for example, some scholars think he is a little unfair to Pope as a man --- but he shares this quality with Dr. Johnson. Memorable phrase-making inevitably produces that effect. And we doubt if Kronenberger will strenuously object to being bracketed with the Great Cham.

Of course, Kronenberger sees the picturesqueness of the eighteenth century; he delights in amusing eccentricity and freely comments on attitudes that appear to him to be wrong. He is never afraid of saying exactly what he likes and dislikes. But, as Joseph Wood Krutch points out so admirably in the Saturday Review, Kronenberger is not merely interested in externals. He admires the writers of the eighteenth century also for the "soundness of their positions and for the truths they tell... He is interested in the fact that something can be said for their attitudes and their way of life; that Pope and Johnson and others said many true and wise things clearly and well."

STEELE'S THE ENGLISHMAN

We should all be grateful to Rae Blanchard (Goucher), who is gradually making available the lesser known works of Sir Richard Steele. In former years, in addition to her well known volume of his correspondence, she has provided excellent texts for many of his rare pamphlets and for his occasional verses. Now she edits the two series of Steele's periodical The Englishman, which have not been reprinted since the early eighteenth century. Again the Clarendon Press has produced one of its admirable reference works.

Where else in the world is there a publisher so devoted to true scholarship, and apparently so unaffected by commercial concerns? Here is one publisher which judges the merit of a work solely on the basis of scholarly usefulness, and not on possible sales. If only there were somehow more like this one, able to take a disinterested stand, and dedicated to the production of superb

texts of eighteenth-century literature! One thing is certain: our debt to Clarendon is growing to astronomical proportions.

In The Englishman Steele was writing as a Whig partisan, and the papers have largely to do with politics. To be sure, in the first series, during the autumn of 1713 and the winter of the next year, there are some comments on literature and social foibles in the manner of Steele's earlier periodicals. And throughout the style is light and entertaining. But increasingly the concentration is on contemporary events, and, as a result, the chief appeal of this volume will undoubtedly be to historians, and to those intensely interested in the political struggle before and after the death of Queen Anne.

As might have been expected, the editing is impeccable and the annotation excellent. Some readers may object to having the running commentary on each issue relegated to the back of the volume, but evidently the aim has been to present the papers as nearly as possible in the form in which they were read by Steele's contemporaries. Thus the main text is unencumbered with notes. In an appendix there is valuable information about the advertisements.

QUINTANA ON SWIFT

Recently we hailed the reprinting of Ricardo Quintana's (Wisconsin) The Mind and Art of Jonathan Swift. Now Quintana has provided a simpler work entitled Swift: an Introduction (O.U.P.), which should serve admirably to introduce undergraduates to the basic themes and problems connected with the great Dean of St. Patrick's. No attempt has been made to trace the career of Swift in detail; there is insufficient space for full scale discussions of individual works. But what Quintana has done in two hundred closely-packed pages is to provide an excellent resume of the results of recent scholarship and to sum up Swift's ideas. The bibliography is very selective. Designed obviously for beginning students and general readers, the book should prove very useful.

A BIOGRAPHY OF THOMAS GRAY

Despite the importance of Gray for all students of mid-eighteenth-century literature, there has hitherto been no dependable full-scale biography. Perhaps one reason has been the relative sameness of so much of his life. A shy, retired scholar does not always make the

best subject for colorful life-writing. Yet Gray had humor and undeniable charm, and his letters provide fascinating insights into a complex and interesting personality. He can be made to live as a person, where someone like Addison cannot.

R. W. Ketton-Cremer, in his new biography of the poet, just published by the Cambridge University Press, does bring Gray to life. Moreover, for the first time we here get all the facts straight, with significant details set in their proper places. Ketton-Cremer has been able to consult some unpublished material and he has had the advantage of inheriting the notes left by the late Leonard Whibley, who had planned a life of Gray. All the available evidence has been deftly woven into a smooth narrative which continually holds the reader's interest. As a biography we think it deserves the highest praise.

Concerning matters of fact we do not see how there can be much quibbling with Ketton-Cremer's account. But with literary criticism, where every reader will have his own interpretations, there may be some disagreement. Thus we ourselves confess to some difference of opinion with the author, particularly as to the interpretation of the *Elegy*, and we suspect there may be other places where readers with different critical tastes will not always agree with his analyses. But one must remember that Ketton-Cremer's purpose has not been to write a book on literary criticism. He set out to paint a portrait of a poet, and here he has been eminently successful. His biography will certainly be the standard life of Gray for a long time to come.

OTHER NEW BOOKS

As copy goes to press, we have had only a glimpse of the first two volumes of René Wellek's monumental History of Modern Criticism (Yale University Press) and so must postpone any serious discussion of it until our next issue. The first volume covers the later eighteenth century, and the second, the Romantic period.

The Augustan Reprint Society has issued, as publication No. 49, "Two St. Cecilia's Day Sermons (1696-1697)" with an Introduction by James E. Philips, Jr.

Edward Hooker writes about The Happy Man by Marie-Sofie Rostvig, a study of the *Beatus ille* theme in seventeenth-century literature. It is published in Oslo, but we haven't yet seen a copy.

Other recent publications which we haven't seen, but gladly list, are: The Journal of William Beckford in Portugal and Spain, 1787-1788 (John Day); William Frost, Dryden and the Art of Translation (Yale University Press); The Works of Nathaniel Lee, edited by Thomas B. Stroup and Arthur L. Cooke (The Scarecrow Press); Index of Printers, Publishers and Booksellers in Donald Wing's Short-Title Catalogue, compiled by Paul G. Morrison; Godfrey Davies, The Restoration of Charles II (Huntington Library).

Of interest to all students of the period is G. R. Havens, The Age of Ideas (Holt).

Your editor's Young Samuel Johnson (Heinemann) will not be ready for publication in England until early autumn.

QUERIES

Ned McAdam (N.Y.U.) is searching for a leaf of Johnson's diary which was once bound up in an extra-illustrated copy of Tom Davies's Memoirs of Garrick, and may be still. On the recto are dates Sept. 6, 7, 8, 1783, and mention of Hales, Aquinas, Chrysostom, Erasmus. On the verso (reproduced in A. M. Broadley's Chats on Autographs), are "Letters to Brocklesby, to Mudge, to Frank, to Susan" and mention of Anna Williams, Stonehenge, Heale, and Sallust. If any of our readers has information about the present location of this leaf, or about extra-illustrated copies of Davies's Memoirs not in well known libraries, please send it to McAdam at once.

Dick Altick (Ohio State) refers to the fact that Charles Knight several times alluded to a statement by Burke to the effect that the British reading public had some 80,000 members, most of them in London. The implication is that the statement was made early in the 1790's. The places where the reference appears are Penny Magazine, Dec. 18, 1832; Knight, The Old Printer and the Modern Press [1854], p. 313; Knight, Passages of a Working Life [1864-65], II, 184. So far, Altick has been unable to find the original source of the quotation. Who can fill in the missing details?

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS ITEMS

In the autumn the Clarendon Press will publish a volume of unpublished lectures by W. P. Ker. James Sutherland writes to us about it, and comments that it will prove a very interesting book.

Beginning with Samuel Butler, it moves on to Dryden, and there are lectures on Crabbe, Burns, Jane Austen, etc. We will look forward eagerly to seeing it when it is available.

Irvin Ehrenpreis (Indiana) has received a Guggenheim Fellowship for next year to continue work on his life and times of Jonathan Swift.

We are pleased to see the second issue of the History of Ideas News Letter. If you wish to subscribe write to Dr. Pierre Garai, Dept. of English, Columbia University, New York 27, N. Y.

We are happy to receive from E. Swift Newton a copy of a little pamphlet entitled A.E.N. -- a moving tribute to his father, the late A. Edward Newton. For those of us who remember the elder Newton with affection, it brings back many happy memories.

Roy Wiles's book on serial publication in the period 1678-1750 is to be published soon by the Cambridge University Press.

We hear that Nancy Moore (Butler) has a most amazing parakeet by the name of Sam Johnson. He is less than a year old, but is amazingly loquacious, completely fearless, and rather frighteningly strong-willed. She has already taught him some famous Johnsonian phrases, and he has picked up by himself some other strong expressions. In his cage is a small, rather odd-looking toy named Boswell whom he caresses only occasionally, being much more given to taking vicious jabs at it. We will follow with interest the further education of this "Young Sam."

Pious Johnsonians will learn with horror of a recent desecration of their idol. We repeat verbatim the account as given in the last issue of The New Rambler. "When workmen of the Lichfield City Council went to the Market Square in September to prepare for the 245th anniversary celebrations of Dr. Johnson's birth, they found that during the night some hooligan had scaled the statue facing Johnson's birthplace, and applied red paint to the eyebrows and upper lip. The local firm of sculptors who attend to the maintenance of the statue were at once informed, and workers speedily arrived to remove the paint, of which, however, some traces were still to be seen when the commemoration took place shortly after noon."

A clipping from the Manchester Guardian recently received tells of a building project which concerns Johnson's Court off

Fleet Street, one of the zigzag passages leading to Johnson's house in Gough Square. The new improvement will include stopping up and building over a part of the old court. In permitting the new project, the City planning authority insisted on receiving in return an equal slice of land, so that free access be given as before to pedestrians.

SOME RECENT ARTICLES

For Dryden enthusiasts there are: Morris Friedman, "Dryden's 'Memorable Visit' to Milton" in HLQ for February; John M. Aden, "Dryden, Corneille, and the Essay of Dramatic Poesy" in RES for April; Paul Ramsey, Jr., "Dryden's Essay of Dramatic Poesy" (the opening scene) in Explicator for May.

Concerned with Swift: Irvin Ehrenpreis, "Four of Swift's Sources" in MLN for February; Irvin Ehrenpreis and James L. Clifford, "Swiftiana in Rylands English MS 659 and Related Documents" in John Rylands Bulletin for March; Padraic Colum, "Return to the Poetry of Jonathan Swift" in Pennsylvania Literary Review for 2nd quarter 1955.

For the other early eighteenth-century writers there are: George Sherburn, "Pope's Minor Poems" (a review article on the new Twickenham volume) in Sewanee Review for April; M. C. Crum, "A Manuscript of Essays by Addison" in Bodleian Library Record for October 1954; R. M. Williams, "Thomson's 'Ode on the Winter Solstice'" in MLN for April; J. R. Moore, "Defoe's 'Essay upon Projects': an Unrecorded Issue" in N&Q for March; Arthur H. Scouten, "The Loyal Post, a Rare Queen Anne Newspaper and Daniel Defoe" in Bulletin of the N.Y. Public Library for April.

Concerned with the novelists: A. R. Towers, "Fielding and Dr. Samuel Clarke" [Amelia] in MLN for April; Jack R. Brown, "Henry Fielding's 'Grub-Street Opera'" in MLQ for March; R. D. Spector, "Smollett and Admiral Byng" in N&Q for February; Edwin B. Knowles, "A Note on Smollett's 'Don Quixote'" in MLQ for March, and his "Don Quixote Abridged" in Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America for First Quarter 1955; Lewis M. Knapp, "Abridgments of Smollett for Children" in N&Q for February; Jean-Claude Salle, "A Source of Sterne's Conception of Time" [Spectator No. 94] in RES for April.

Others to be mentioned are: Bertram D. Sarason, "Edmund Burke's Burial Place" in N&Q for February; Leonard Schwartzstein,

"Knight, Ireland, Steevens, and the Shakespeare Testament" in the same issue; Emmett L. Avery, "The Dublin Stage, 1736-1737" in the same issue; Arthur Sherbo, "Christopher Smart's 'English Bull Dog,' 'Dutch Mastiff,' and 'Quail,'" in the same issue; A. H. Scouten, "Cibber's 'The Humourists,'" in N&Q for March; G. E. Bentley, Jr., "A Footnote to Blake's Treason Trial" in the same issue; Morris Golden, "Goldsmith and 'The Distresses of a Hired Writer'" in N&Q for April; E. W. Bovill, "William Larkins of Bengal 1755-1800" in the same issue; Alexander M. Kinghorn, "Scots Literature and Scottish Antiquarians, 1750-1800" in Texas Studies in English (1954); Harry W. Pedicord, "Rylands English MS. 1111: an Early Diary of Richard Cross (d. 1760), Prompter to the Theatres" in John Rylands Bulletin for March; John G. Gazley, "Arthur Young, Agriculturalist and Traveller, 1741-1820: Some Biographical Sources" in the same issue; C. Gesner, "David Garrick and the Russian Theatre" in MLR for April; Mary E. Knapp, "John the Painter and Silas Deane" in Yale University Library Gazette for April; Ian Gregor, "The Last Augustan: George Crabbe" in Dublin Review for First Quarter 1955; Davis Holland, "Contemporary Collectors: IV, the Rothschild Library" in The Book Collector for Spring 1955.

JOHNSON ON JOHNSON

From Donald Greene (Calif. at Riverside) comes the note: "In Rambler 140, Johnson makes fun of anachronisms committed by dramatists: 'The god of love is mentioned in Tamerlane with all the familiarity of a Roman epigrammatist; and a late writer has put Harvey's doctrine of the circulation of the blood into the mouth of a Turkish statesman, who lived near two centuries before it was known even to philosophers or anatomists.'

The offending 'late writer' is evidently Samuel Johnson, in whose Irene, published a year or two before, the Turkish statesman Cali Bassa (fl. 1453) is made to speak of

A happy land, where circulating pow'r
Flows through each member of th'embodied state
(Act I, Scene 2).

Are there any other examples of self-criticism in Johnson's works?"